

A.E.27.1X.
Willard, S.

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S. Willard

FUNERAL SERMON ON GOV. LEVERET, BOSTON,
1679.

562A (Willard, Samuel.) A Sermon Preached upon *Ezek. 22, 30, 31.* Oceasioned by the Death of the much honoured John Leveret, Esq., Governoir of the Colony of the Mattachusetts, N. E. By S. W. Teacher of the South Church in Boston.

Small 4to, half morocco. Boston: Printed by John Foster, in the Year 1679.

Collation: Title, pp. 1-13.

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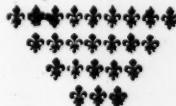
A SERMON

PREACHED UPON Ezek. 22.30,31.

Occasioned by the Death of the
much honoured

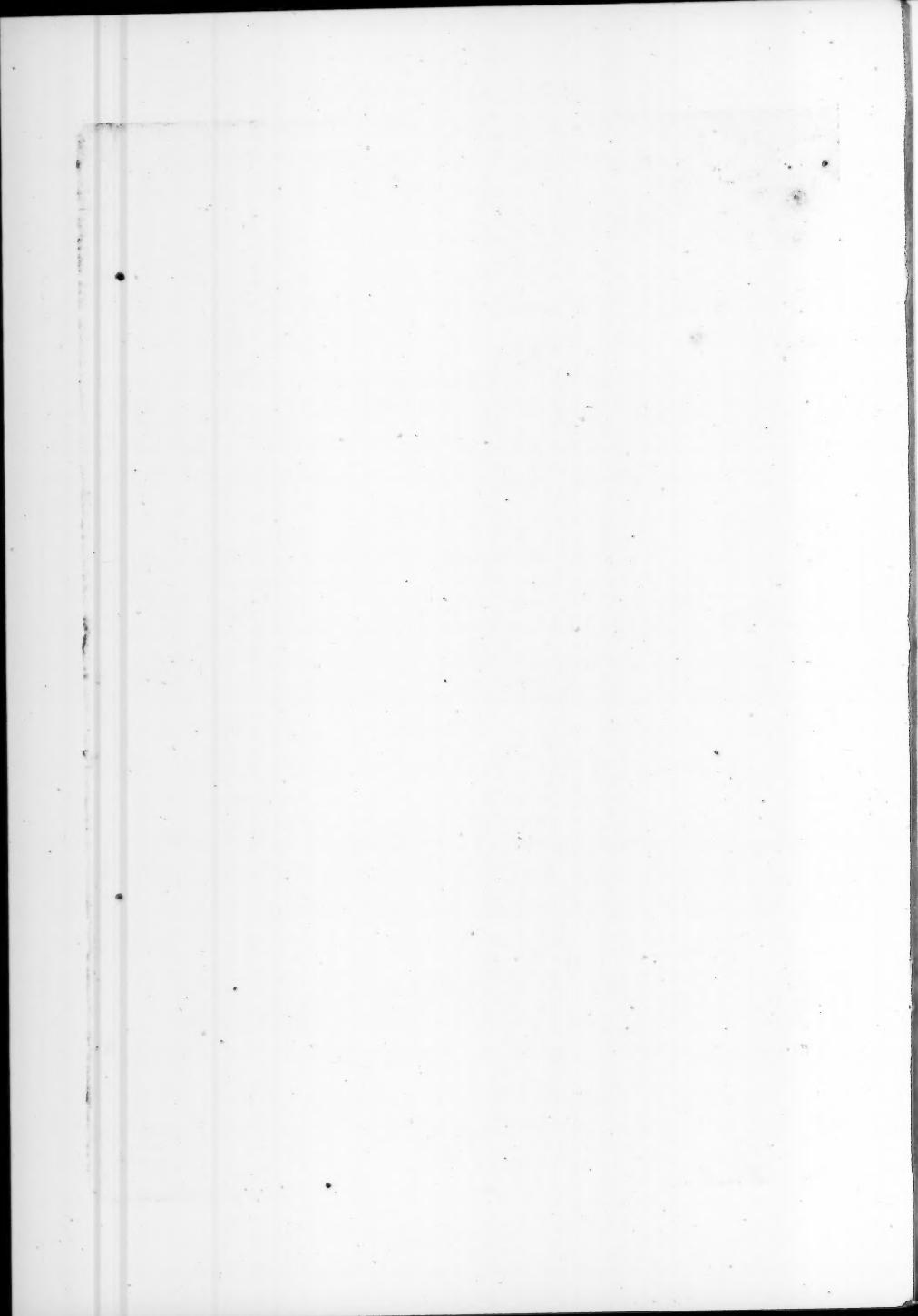
JOHN LEVERET Esq;
*Gouvernor of the Colony of the
Massachusetts. N-E.*

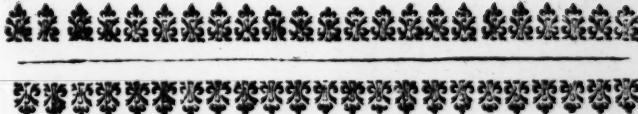
*By S.W. Teacher of the South Church
in Boston.*



BOSTON,

Printed by John Foster, in the Year 1679.





E Z E K. XXII. XXX. XXXI.

And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land; that I should not destroy it, but I found none: Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them, I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath; their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord God.

TH E Prophet *Ezekiel* was one of the first Captivity under *Nebuchadnezer*, carried to *Babylon* with King *Jehoakin*: He prophesied therefore in the most degenerate times of that people: and hence the most of his Prophesies are convictive, and comminatory; and such is this Chapter before us. Here we shall see God sitting as a Judge upon an apostatized and guilty people. The matter of the Chapter consists of a particular enumeration of their grievous sins, and denunciation of Judgment against them for that reason. This is delivered in three distinct Prophesies; one from the beginning to v. 17. The second from thence to v. 23. The last from v. 23. to the end. Our Text falls within the third Prophecy, the scope of which is to declare and vindicate the righteous Judgement of God against Judah and Jerusalem: and there are two parts in it.

I. The Ground or moving cause of the controversy which God had with them, in three Particulars.

1. Their unreclaimableness under former Judgements, allegorically expressed, ver. 24. *Thou art a land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation.* q.d. Though Judgments have fallen on you, yet they have not been as a water that hath washed away your iniquities, but you remain filthy still. Judgments did not effect or bring about their Repentance.

2. The prevalency of sin in all orders of men, with an enumeration of the most prevailing abominations; in the Prophets, ver. 25. 28. in the Priests, ver. 26. in the Prince, ver. 27. in the body of the People, ver. 29. Apostacy was become universal.

3. That there were none to stand between God and them to avert, or turn away his just indignation, and hold his hands, and stay the course of his wrath that it might not seize and ruin them, ver. 30.

II. The Judgement it self, which is declared as an Effect from these causes, and by them vindicated to be just and equal, ver. 31. our Translation reads it in the preter Tense² as of a thing which was past, and God here clears up to be righteous: and then it must bear respect to *Jehoiakins Captivity*: *Iun. Trem.*, and *Pisc.* read it in the future, and then it must referre to the desolation under *Zedekiah*, which soon after fell out. In the *Hebr.* the first Verb is in the *future*, the other two in the *preter*; but the one is used frequently for the other in Prophetical Scriptures, God often speaks of what he will do, as if it were already done, because of the certainty of it.

The words of our Text render us the next and immediate Reason of *Judah's* destruction, viz. there were none found in it to turn away the wrath of God from it, *no soe one*: the words clearly hold out unto us these three things.

1. Gods great lenity towards a people guilty of deepest Apostacy, *one* man might have held his hand, he looked but for *one*.

2. *Judah's* sad and deplorable condition, when they wanted this man: times were grown sadly degenerate indeed, that there was *none* that appeared to stand in the gap.

3. The equity of Gods proceedings against a sinning people, when they have never a healer of breaches, none to stop gaps.

Isought, [baqashah] The word signifies the seeking of a thing with great diligence, to look for a thing studiously, and with earnest endeavour, the *Septuagint* usually translate it by a word that signifies an extraordinary seeking after anything.

Gap, [perez] The word signifies a breach that is made in a Wall by battery, &c. The Metaphors may be explained in the Sequel.

Doct. When Apostacy hath opened a breach to let in misery, and God seeks for, but cannot find a man to make it up, it is a sad presage of great Calamity. When sin hath made way for Gods wrath, and there is none to interpose, this is an evil Omen of great misery. In the Explication we may consider,

1. What is meant by the *Hedge*? 2. What is meant by the *Gap* in the hedge, and how it is made? 3. What it is to *make up the Hedge*, and *Send in the Gap*? 4. Who is the man that may do this? 5. When it is that God seeks a man, and can find none? 6. The ground and Reason of the Doctrine.

1. *What is meant by this Hedge?*

Answ. An Hedge is properly a sort of Fence which is set about an Enclosure, for its safety & defence: the ends unto which it serves are chiefly two, viz. that it may be kept in the owners propriety, & not lye common;

as also to keep out damage by Beasts which might otherwayes get in and do mischief. This Hedge then of which our Text speaks, is the gracious promise and Providence whereby God affords divine protection unto a people that are in visible Covenant with him. Criticks observe that the word [gadar] signifies a wall of stone that is laid up without lime or mortar, such as is made about orchards or Fields: it is translated by a more general word, as Fence, *Isai.62.3. You are as a Walling Fence*, and a wall, *Numb.22.24. A wall being on the one side*, &c. the Church is Gods Vineyard, and he hedgeth it in.

1. By his Promise or Covenant, whereby he looks upon it as his propriety, he takes it (as it were) out of the worlds common, and fenceth it off: when a people are in Covenant with God, he looks upon them as his own, and he promiseth or engageth to them his favour, provided they keep Covenant with him: now this hedge of the Covenant distinguisheth between the Church and the world, and therefore we shall find that the people of God in visible Covenant are said to be a people seperated, *1 King.8.53. Thou didst seperate them from all the people of the Earth to be thine Inheritance*: and they are commanded to keep themselves seperated, *2 Cor.6.17. Come out from among them, and be ye separate*.

2. By his providential care of them, looking after them, watching over them for good, defending them and keeping off evil from them, the Pillars of Cloud and fire in the Wilderness, which stood over the Camp of Israel, were Emblems of this protecting Providence, and when God planted his Vineyard, i.e. his Church in the Land of Canaan, it is said, he fenced it, *Isai.5.2.* and what is this Fence, but his vigilant and powerful defence? So it is expounded, *Cchap.27.3. I will keep it night and day*: it is a care of Providence that none shall do it any harm, either keeping in, and restraining of wicked men, (who are like the Beasts of the Wilderness) from attempting of anything against it; or else defeating of them in their attempts, that they shall not break their way through, to lay it waste.

2. What is the Gap in the hedge, and how is it made?

Answ. A Gap is properly a breach which is made in a wall or Fence, whereby it is laid open, or exposed unto Inroads. Now this Gap which is under consideration, is a way that is opened to let in the Judgements of God upon a people, which could find no way in as long as the Hedge was kept up, & this is done when God is by the sins of his people provoked to profane his Covenant, and suspend his protecting Providence which was their safety, so that either man may be said to make a Gap, or else it may be said of God that he doth it.

1. Man is said to make the Gap when he pollutes Gods holy Covenant: a people in visible Covenant stand upon their good behaviour, as they carry it so they may expect it shall go with them; *Levi.1.19,20. If ye be willing and obedient ye shall eat the fruit of the Land*, &c. God hath promised that as long as they do well, it shall go well with them: hence therefore when a people depart from the Rules of obedience, and violate their Oath given unto God, then they give God advantage to do them harm; they clear him of his Oath and Promise: nay, because every visible Church is a spot of *Emanuels Land*, which he hath taken up for himself, and fenced in for his own use, therefore Apollacry makes it a polluted Land, and this is greatly provoking to a holy God: now therefore God is no longer held under obligation to protect and take any further care for them; and that is a very great Gap, when a people through provocation, lay themselves naked & open to divine displeasure. A 3

2. God

2. God may be said to make a *Gap*, when he makes a way for his wrath, according to that expression, *Psal. 78.50.* he made a way to his anger : and this is then done, when he removes out of the way those things which he had before used as instrumental causes of their safety and security, *vix.*

1. When he takes away wise, pious, and zealous Rulers, and gives them foolish and wicked ones in their Room. Godly and faithful Governors are a defence, they keep off Judgements, by keeping of things in order ; by maintaining the honour of God, they maintain the peace and prosperity of a people : whilst *Jacob* doth well, in the days of *Jebosatib*, Israel prospers ; such therefore are pronounced to be a blessing, & the want of them is declared to be a woe; *Ec. 10. 16,17.* good Rulers do oblige Apostacy, and punish sin ; whereas wicked Princes do encourage it by impunity, and evil Example: and thus you shall find God made a *Gap* in *Judah*, by taking away men of place and worth from among them, *Isai. 3.2,3.*

2. When God leaves good Rulers to themselves, and to act their own corruptions : either to a frigid neglect in their zeal for God, and foolish indulgence towards wayes of wickedness, thus *Eli's* neglect to punish his sons for their horrible crimes, made a gaping breach upon *Israel*, *1 Sam. 2.30. 3.11.* or to some great fall, whereby Gods name is highly dishonoured, thus *David* by his sinful numbering of the people, opened a way to the devouring plague : so true is that *Maxime,---Delirant reges, plentus tur Achtvi,* Rulers sins make way for the peoples sufferings. *David* by the matter of *Uriah*, brought a Sword upon his house, and all *Israel* is laid open by it : *Hezekiah's* pride and ingratitude brings wrath upon him, and upon *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, *2 Chron. 32.25.*

3. When God doth Judicially give up a people to sin, and this is usually a consequent of some former Apostacys, of which they would not be convinced, for which they were not humbled : for sin is the great gap-maker, and therefore when their hearts are hardened, and they are left to their lusts, then there is a door set wide open to ruine, *Psal. 81.11,12.* *Ifrael would none of me, so I gave them up to their own hearts lusts;* and this made gaps on all sides, *Hos. 4.17. let him alone:* *g. 4. be will make himself naked enough,* he will throw down all his defence.

4. When God takes off those chains of fear which were a restraint to Enemies, and causeth them to be Adversaries to his People. When *Jacob* travelled through *Canaan*, God put a fear into the Inhabitants of the Land, that they durst not pursue after him, this was a Fence to *Jacob*, it was his security : but when God puts courage into the hearts of their Enemies, and stirs them up to engage themselves, and make combinations against his People, this makes a gap : thus God is said to stir up Adversaries against *Solomon*, when he went after strange Gods.

5. When he takes away the Spirits and Courage from his People, and fills them with panick fears : when their heart faints, and Spirit dyes in them, when they are made to be afraid of a shadow, to start at a fancy, and flee when none pursues, these are miseries menaced against a backsliding People. *Lev. 26. 17,36.* magnanimity and resolution in a people is a defence, it renders them formidable ; but when once their Courage is gone, there is a breach, an inlet to forrows, it renders a people a scorn and reproach to their Neighbours, and every one will have a snap at them.

6. When he leaves them to a Spirit of division, and contention among themselves,

selves; especially when this grows up to an alienation of their hearts one from another, *Hos. 10.2.* their heart is divided, now shall they be found faulty : divisions are rents, and lay open the nakedness of any People : they expose themselves an easy prey to any devourers, whilst they are busie in devouring one another: a divided people are out of joyn, weak and contemptible : well might there be *searchings of heart for Rebukes divisions.*

3. *What is it to make up the hedge and stand in the Gap?*

A. These two Phrases note a double work incumbent on such,

1. To make up the hedge intimates a taking away the provoking cause, which being removed, according to the tenor of the Covenant of Gods free grace, the breach which a people have made upon themselves by their sin, is repaired; and this is done when they are brought to a true & through reformation & repentance; for God hath given in his word and promise, that he will accept of this at their hands : as Sin made a breach, so Repentance makes it up again : yea & by this means also are the breaches that God hath made repaired, because Gods anger being now turned away from his people, he is reconciled to them again in Jesus Christ, and now he calls in his Judgments, and puts forth anew his care for his peoples defence and preservation, *Jer. 42.12.* And hence, when there are such as are carefull to use the means of Reformation, and doe powerfully put them in execution, and prosecute them with zeal and resolution to effect, in this way the hedge is made up, and its breaches repaired.

2. To stand in the Gap notes an act, or continued acts of zeal, and it is done when there are such as thrust themselves in between a finning people, and a provoked God, and doe theirs utmst to stand in the way of Judgements and stop them : when there are those, who though they cannot doe what they would in Reformation, yet doe the utmost they can both with God, and with a revolting people; both intercede with God, and bear a due testimony against sin. Thus Aaron when a flood of misery was broke in, throws himself in the midst of it and makes an atonement, *Numb. 16.47,48.* *He took incense, and stood between the living and the dead, and the plague was stayed:* when they hold Gods hand, so that he cannot doe what he otherwise wold, as long as they are there. Sodom would not burn so long as *Zor* was in it, but assoon as he was out it proved but tinder to the sparks of divine indignation. As also when they execute due punishment upon those that are the procuring cause of these Judgments, thus the Levites by their integrity and impartiality turned away wrath from the people, when they appeared on the Lords side, and slew every man his brother, *Exod. 32.26.* thus *Phineas* his zeal, when he slew *Zimri* and *Cochbi*, those impudent sinners, was greatly acceptable unto God, and stayed his anger, which was out against his people, *Numb. 25.11,12.* these are those Worthies that have power with God himself that blunt the edge of his fury, and turn by the stroke of his revenge, that it cannot light where else it would.

4. *Who is the man bat may do this?*

Answ. Out of question there were at this time many pious, truly godly, and sincere ones in *Judea*, and they were such as God took special notice of, such as mourned for the iniquity and abominations of the times and places, and God had special mercy for them : the destroying Angel must suspend doing Execution, till these had a mark set upon them for deliverance, *Ezek. 9. begin*, but every good man is not a man that can make up the breach ; though every Christian ought in-

his place, to do his utmost that it may be made up. But the man that may accomplish such a business as this is, must be a man of these endowments and qualifications.

1. He must be a leading man, i. e. a man in Authority, one that is a Ruler among his people, a man of power, and influence : a work of Reformation is set about in vain, and to no purpose, if Rulers do not lead in it : private men do but in vain urge and perwade Reformation, if mean while Superiors do countenance or so much as connive at sin : men that are in place of power have very great advantages in their hands, if they have but a heart, to do much for a peoples welfare, which private men have no opportunity of doing: their command hath authority, their very Example carries the force of a Law with it : and hence it is the Scripture doth lay so much weight upon this, the having of good or bad Rulers over a People.

2. He must be a godly man; for although it is not to be denied, that God doth often make use of meekly moral men, to be very serviceable and beneficial to his People; yet this is also to be confidered, that in times of great and epidemical degeneracy, when the body of a people, and all orders have corrupted themselves, he that will hazard himself in so difficult and unthankful a work as that of making up the breach, and will do it effectually, had need to be soundly principled : there are so many Temptations in it, and so strong to bias and turn him out of this course, that if true grace ballance not, self Interest will hazard to prevail : except a man do both know and believe that God will own, stand by, and graciously reward him, he will find no other encouragement, but all Arguments to move him to desist. And therefore we shall find that when God promiseth unto Israel a blessing in a King, he engageth to give them a man after his own heart, 1 Sam. 13. 14.

3. He must be a publick spirited man, such an one as *Nebemiah* was, Neh. 2. 10 It grieved them exceedingly that there was a man come to seek the welfare of the Children of Israel : such as have the common good of the people lying upon their hearts, men that are studious for Jerusalems peace, and prefer it before their own best joy; they must not be *Gallio* like Spirited, that care not how things go; nor men that only take care to secure their own Cabbins, while the Ship is sinking : but such whose life is bound up in the Tranquility of their People.

4. He must be a man of a Skilful, discerning, and observing Spirit; one that doth consider, and can understand the times and seasons, and what Israel ought to do. It is not enough to be vers'd in general Maximes of State, but to know how to deal in the very change of a peoples manners : How else shall they know what is their own proper duty incumbent on them, and the particular work which belongs to their Generation, to be serviceable to God and his people in : for, as the times vary, so hath God various works for his Servants to do, the neglect of which may bring a great deal of misery : it was therefore *Iffacbars* commendation that they understood the Times.

5. He must be a man of great zeal for the glory of God : one that counts it his best policy to be true and faithful to the Interest of Jesus Christ : the Worlds Politicians are afraid to do this or that, lest it should have bad Events, should not be resented, or they suffer reproach, &c. I do not deny, but believe, that it is a point of Christian prudence in any Rulers, to know what cannot be done at present, & not throw themselves upon unavoidable hazards, when they may better use other

other wayes to accomplish their duty. *David* knew when the Military sword was too long for the Civil, and the sons of *Zerubbabel* were too strong for him, and hence reprieves *Joab* till *Solomon's* reign, then to suffer Justice for his murder. But, when men think it is rather their interest to pleale men then to be true to God, and hence will goe no further then what may gratifie mens corruptions, nor doe more then the spirits of an apostate people are willing to bear, will rather connive at sin, then lose the love of sinners, these are not men for the Gap, they will never be acknowledged by God to be among the number of those that make up the hedge : No, he must be a man of *Phinehas* his spirit, let him be what he will, if he be a troubler of Israel, he will not fear or spare him.

6. He must be a man of Courage and undaunted resolution, he must be like *Jeremiah*, a man made up of bras and iron : *Jer. 1.18. I have made thee an iron Pillar, and brazen wall against this People.* He must be such an one as *Nebuchadnezzar*, that was not daunted by, nor deserted his work because of the Threatnings of his Enemies, but stood upon the credit of his Religion, and God, *Neb. 6.11. Shall such a man as I flee?* he that makes up breaches in times of great Apostacies shall find it to flesh and blood a discouraging work, he shall have his heart and hands full; a backsliden people are not easily reformed ; he that endeavours to do it shall be reproached, fligmatized by reviling tongues, for a Persecutor and a bloody man, as (*Numb. 16.41. 2 Sam. 16.7.8.*) *Moses* and *David* : if he punishe it is cruelty, if he curbe in encroaching errors it is Tyranny, and he shall hear defaming on every side, and he had need therefore to be resolute.

7. He must be a man of a tender heart, one that is affected with every Token of Gods anger that discovers it self in his word and works : such a man was *Isaiah*, and God bestowed a blessing upon him for it, *2 Cbren. 34.27. because thy heart was tender, &c.* when he heard the book of the Law read, and knew that wrath was out against Judah, it humbled him, and drove him to God : there is many times a stupid Spirit that regards not, takes no notice of the wrath of God, *Isai. 42.25. he set him on fire round about, yet he knew it not, it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart:* such a Spirit will obstruct this work of healing the breaches of a people.

8. He must be a man of vigour and activity : one that will himself set about the work, and fee to the effectual doing of it : it is not enough to enact Orders, or give them a civil Sanction, but care must be taken that they be put in Execution, else they are but a mock of Reformation, sin is not frightened away with words ; it is a great busines to make up the breach, and therefore it requires a vigilant and diligent man to do it : one that will be up and doing.

9. He must be a man of a fervent Spirit of Prayer : the most of the work in making up the breach is to be done with God; when he puts into the Gap, he must have a deep Interest in Gods love, how else shall he prevail to stay his hand, and stope his wrath, yea, all his wisdome, Counsel, Courage, Succes, must first be gained in Heaven: he must be such a man as *Moses* & *David* were, men that could put in with God for the People : hence, when God intended good dayes for Jerusalem, he premilieft them watchmen that shall not hold their peace, or give him rest, till he establish, & make Jerusalem a praise in the Earth, *Isai. 62.6,7.* In a word, when all these qualifications do not meet in a man, he is not compleatly accomplished for this work: he may truly belong to God, & he may also do something, but he is not the man that God looks for, nor can he be truly called a *Repairer of breaches.*

5. When is it that God seeks for a man, and can find none ?

Ans/w. The phrase is an improper kind of Speech, uttered according to the manner

ner of men, who seek in order to finding a thing : but God sees all things with one sight : but the intention of it is, to represent before us the patience of God, in delaying the full Execution of his wrath, and when Judgement hath begun, he waits to see what those *Preludia* of sorrows will effect upon a people, and whether they will awaken men that are in Authority to set their shoulders to this work : Gods beginning lighter strokes upon a revolting people, are probationary, to see if there be any sparks of such a Spirit to be found in those that are Rulers, or whither there be an absolute security and fottishness fallen upon them : and when God doth this, though he may see and find many mourners in Zion, and such as tremble at his word yet these do it in secret, they save their own Souls, but the breaches are not made up by them ; sin rules and reigns abroad notwithstanding, and meets no check nor restraint : In summe, when Rulers in Common-wealth and Church are not such men, there are none at all, it exceeds the advantage of men in a private Capacity to be so ; so that when these men are all, either degenerate, or discouraged from their work, and do not attend it sedulously, there is none to do this busines, and we may be sure the Hedge will not grow up spontaneously, or of its own accord : an apostate people will not reform of themselves, but must be quickned and led to it, if therefore they are thus neglected, breaches will no doubt grow wider every day, and new breaches will be dayly made, by renewed provocationes the Gap will be laid wide open, and any devouring plagues may come in.

6. For the clearing up the ground or reason of the Doctrine, we may take these Affections.

1. That which God expects of a people whom he takes to be a vineyard of his own, is, that they shoulde bring forth fruit to his glory. *Isa. 43. 21. This people have I formed i.e. agen moulded into a people, or Civil and Church polity] for my self, they shall bear forth my glorie.* And *Cap. c. 2. He looked that his Vineyard should yield grapes.* God expects a Covenant people should be an holy people; he therefore when he had told Israel what he had done for them, also declares what it was that he expected from them, *Deut. 7. 11. 8. 12. 10. 12.*

2. When a People instead of bringing forth fruits of holiness, fructifie and abound in wickedness, they frustrate Gods just expectations : they are like a field, though sown with good grain, yet yields nothing but briars and thorns and thistles, like a garden plentifully in weeds, though sown with herbs, like a Vineyard of wild flower grapes, *what advantage hath the owner by such fruits?* It answers not his cost of fencing and setting. See for this *Isa. 5. 3.*

3. Hence the apostacy of a Covenant people must needs be a grievous provocation : if the husbandman had taken no pains, and laid out no cost upon his field, it were not much to find it fruitless, but for a fig-tree in a vineyard that is under fence and manuring, to be fruitless, this is matter of just displeasure, the husband man past a deserved sentence, *Luk. 13. 7. Cast it down, why cumbereth it the ground.* God speaks of such a thing as if he were amus'd at it, or could not tell what to make of such a thing as that, *Jer. 2. 21.* that a noble plant should so degenerate.

4. If now the Fence begin to tumble down, & spoilers to come upon them, if Judgements break in on all sides, a righteous dispensation, & their apostacy & wickedness made the breach meritoriously, for God did it, & therefore because they had provoked him, *Isa. 42. 24. Who gave Jacob for a spoil? &c. The Lord against whom they have smard.* What man would be so imprudent to be at cost and care, to keep up the fence about, and manure a field, that yielded him no fruit or income ?

5. When God hath purpose of favour and good will to a declining people, though

hereto make *Herodes* upon them, yet he raised up Instruments fitted and prepared for the making up of what is amiss, and standing between him and the people that he may not destroy them : thus we shall have, that when *Saints* Apostacy had almost wasted Israel, he raised up *David* to be helpful to repair and restore them again : when *Ahab*'s wicked reign had corrupted, and near ruined the Kingdom of Judah, he gives him *Hezekiah*, that great Reformer, and eminent man in the Gap, for a successor : thus after *Menasseb* and *Ammon*, succeeded godly and zealous *Iosias* : and there is great Reason for this way, for the general Reformation of a corrupted people is a great work, and cannot ordinarily be carried on without the eminent zeal and forwardness of Leaders.

6. Hence when there are no such, it is a sign that there is no amendment like to be; & what must the consequent of such a case be, but ruine and desolation. God discovers much of his own mind and purpose by this matter, and where he spirits none to the proper work of declining times, he may wait a while in patience, and procrastinate his wrath, but if there be no remedy, if there be none to heal the wound, what remains but amputation ? a hopeless people are cast in Law, they are plants that do but burden the Earth they grow on, and what are they fit for but burning ?

vise I. For Information of our Judgements in three Particulars.

1. That pious and zealous Rulers are a very great blessing. I know that the corruption of the hearts of men is licentious, and every lust desires to enjoy its liberty, and hence such as will indulge mens humors, are most pleasing, and will give best content to the carnal heart ; but this proceeds from mens ignorance and wickedness : such Rulers as these, are in a word of sober Truth, the only men ; they have a deep Interest in God, he owns their zeal, and the people shall fare the better for them ; and they are strongly set for the good of the people amongst whom they live ; they are indeed the alone men that seek the welfare of their Country : it is therefore a great wickedness for any to repine against, and a great duty to bless God for such : if there be any breach made, these are they that will be diligent to make it up ; if there be any Judgement coming, these be they that will adventure into the Gap, and shut it out, they are, under God, the happiness of a people ; and the want of them declares any people miserable, both *Hiram*, and the Queen of *Sheba* could see and did acknowledge that, that God therefore chose *Solomon* to be King, because he loved Israel, 2 *Cron.* 2. 11. 1 *King.* 10. 9.

2. That whatsoever may tend to the prevention or removal of the Judgements of God, is a part of the duty incumbent upon Rulers. All things that may tend to the making up of the Hedge, and stopping of the Gap, come properly under their cognizance : and hence it follows, that whatsoever sin is a provocation to God, and may be an occasion of wrath against a people, they both have Authority, and it lies upon them in duty to suppress it : hence men deal injuriously, and act against themselves also, who would confine their Authority to matters only of the second Table ; unless we can say that Atheisme, Heresy, despising Gods Ordinances, cursing, swearing, abusing Gods blessed Name, and profanation of his holy Sabbaths, are no provoking sins, nor such as open a door to let in the anger of God ; against which the whole current of Scripture doth plentifully bear witness : or shall we be so foolish as to think, that when God hath set up all orders of men for his own glory, and hath in particular appointed Rulers to rule for God that they not only may, but ought to be regardless of those things which do move immediately,

immediately concern this glory of his? or shall we think that if they let Judgment come at these breaches, and put not forth their authority to stop them, they shall not be charged for the neglect of a duty necessary for the peace and prosperity of their people?

3. That the death of such men, who when they lived were diligent in such a work as this, viz. to make up the breach, and stand in the Gap, especially at such a time when there is much of this work to doe, is matter of deep humbling and lamentation. The los of one such man, in a time wherein iniquity doth abound, may be so sadly circumstanced, as that it may be the occasion of the ruine and desolation of a people: Sad changes many times are the product of such a providence. what was it that occasioned this doleful condition of Judah mentioned in our text? why good Josiah was gone, that great flickler for God, and mender of Jerusalems hedge: the people were bad enough in his time, but he suppresseth open wickedness destroyed idolatry, maintained & enlarged Religion, & it was well with Judah in his dayes. But when once he was removed out of the way, though they still had a King, Zedekiah, yet he did nothing in the gap, except it were to make it wider: wickednes and profaneſſe might ſit in the gate, & ride in the ſtreets unpunished; now Desolation comes. Godly and zealous Rulers are Pillars, they hold up the earths foundations that it doth not fall. *Pſal. 75.3.* One ſuch man then ought not to dye without the tears of all Israel: there were bitter Lamentations made for Josiah when he was dead, as we ſhall find, 2. *Chron. 35. 24.25.* And there was good reason for it, for when he dyed good dayes died with him; when his Sun ſat, the Sun of Judahs prosperity ſat too; he goes out of the gap into his grave, and the Boar of the wildernes preſently breaks in, and layes waste the vineyard of Gods own planting: they were diſmal dayes that followed that eclipse. I know there are times when a child may lead a people, whileſt piety is prevalent among them, and the fear of God lyes upon them: But when wickednes is exalted, and ſin gets head, when mens corruptions grow powerfull, he muſt be a man indeed, one of a thouſand, ſingularly ſpirited by God, that is able to manage affairs for Gods glory, and a peoples Tranquility, and therefore when ſuch men dye, that los is not eaſily repaired: it is breach upon breach. For ſin to break in, and zealous oppoſitors of ſin and ſuppreſſors of iniquity to be taken out of the way; God is then angry indeed, and to lament the los of ſuch, is but to lament our own los.

Uſe II. For Exhortation, in ſeveral particulars.

1. It may call us into the dust and mourning at remembrance or conſideration of the displeaſure of God which is out againſt us upon this account, in the los of ſo many, and at ſuch a juncture of time, that might have been truly ſtyled men that flood in the Gap. The preſent ſolemn ſtroke of divine displeaſure in the death or that honourable Personage, whom I lament, not only for private reſpeſſe (which claim it) but as he was a man publickly both great and good, pointed me to this preſent diſcourse, and the thoughts of it bring to mind reiterated ſtrokes of the ſame nature fo lateſt inflicted; & indeed the voice of Providence is loud, the Lord God hath ſpoken, who can but propheſie: and I would endeavour (God helping) to put you into true mourning, let me therefore entreat you to put on theſe conſiderations.

1. Who they were whom we have lost: I know it is one part of the infeli-ci-ty of divided times, that few men dye universally lamented, how useful ſoever they have been in their Generations? because of prejudices which are the na-tural fruits of ſuch ſeasons: but if prejudice may be commanded to hold its tongue,

and

and Truth may be admitted to speak, and due allowance of Charity granted to men labouring in their clay Tabernacle with a body of death, which the best of men have alwayes needed to cloak their imperfections, (and a David without it, would have past an harsh censure) they were men of singular worth & eminency: what shall I say more? they were men ready to set their hands to repair our Hedge, and hazard themselves to stand in the Gap: men willing to sacrifice their lives for the publick weal and safety of this people; men pretious in the sight of God, and deserving to be registered in the Rolls, and sounded by the Trumpet of Fame, & for whom was prepared an Immortal, & never fading Crown of glory.

2. The seafon when they were taken away, good or evil are much aggravated by the time in which they happen: when good men are taken away in an evil day it doubles the misery, and such is the present case, it is a time wherein there was never more need of them: God accomplisheth his works in the world ordinarily by Instruments; and if they are removed, must not the work lyē undone? it is a time in which many evils are broken in upon us; when Judgements are making their Inodes with violence: how many sore breaches are there to be seen in our Hedge? what great desolation hath the Sword made among us? this hath been a sad Inundation: how low hath the sickness brought us? what a breach hath been made upon our quiet by the secret plots and contrivances of Enemies abroad against us? heart divisions among us are rents exposing us, not a little to be made a prey to others: errors and heresies have made a great Gap, and what miseries may come in at that Gap, we have reason to dread: wantonness, pride, and profaneness have gained a general liking, and how broke they in, but at some great hole in the wall? here was a great work to do, to repair all these breaches, and now that such as shoud have done it, are so many of them removed, this shoud be for a lamentation.

3. How much are we weakened by this los: faithful and zealous Rulers are the Chariots and Horfmen, i.e. the defence and safeguard of Israel. The people made that an Argument to diswade David from going any more into the battel, because they counted him worth ten thousand of them: we lose many in one, when any such are taken away: such wounds are like the cutting off the hajds of a people, yea, stopping their breath, we have so many the fewer intercessors for us at the throne of grace; yea, every work must go on slowly, when principal workmen are called off from their work: David accounted himself weak by the los of Abner; but they are better men then he, whom we have lost: and if they be notwithstanding mis'd, especially at this day, it is no Argument of our happiness, but if our teneleſt stupidity under our great misery.

4. What are the prognosticks of this los: we may say as the Prophet; *had not the Lord left us a remnant, we had been as Sodom, and like to Gomorrah.* The Lord be blessed that we have a Remnant of worthy Patriots, whose fidelity and godly zeal hath born witnes that they are men for the Gap: and were not this our hope under God, we were indeed a very miserable people, But let us know, that such Concussions in State are Ominous, and forebode undesirerable changes: In evil times, when those that should withstand the evil of them, are taken from it, it faſh that God hath more evil to bring upon a people, and intends not to be hindred in his work. The Plucking up of Pillars, is in order to the pulling down of the house: when God removes such, it is to make the way plain for his Judgements; they lay as Mounds and bulwarks in the way to fend them off: and we may think what we will of such Changes: and may perhaps inwardly rejoice and

be well contented that such, and such are gone, nay, may be ready to say, as some have not spared to do when they were alive, that they were the troublers of Israel, that their zeal against sin hath brought Gods Judgements upon the Land, & if more of them were gone the same way, it would be well: nay, we may lift at them, to lay them aside, as men that cannot serve the turn of the time because they cannot temporize: and bespatter their names with odious & laudierous scandals Yet let me assure you in a word of truth, that you need not make such haste to be rid of them, God is doing the work fast enough, and there needs but a few more to be laid aside by thy folly (*O N-E*) or laid up in the grave by Gods displeasure against thee, and the wide gaps which thy sin, and Gods wrath have made in thee will be left empty, and stand open and desenceless; and what Seas of misery will follow; the Lord grant thou mayest not by experience know, but have the grace to prevent. But let me tell you, The unla nented death of righteous Rulers, is as sure a presage of Calamity coming as any I know: and when God looks into the Gap, and sees none standing there, thou shalt then know to thy cost, what thole were worth, whom thou hast now not only despised, but hated. God grant we may now humble our selves under his mighty hand, else methinks I foresee the day when we shall have opportunity to bewail our own madnes, and *New-England* shall sit solitary, and say, I once had choice blessings, had I but known the worth of them: I once had skilfull Rulers, that knew how to search, and heal my wounds, that could step in and intercede for me with God, & were not afraid to resist the evil that was growing upon me; that would confront profaness, and suppreſſ abomination; then did I enjoy good hopes; but now all fluses are pulled up, and flood-gates are set open, and a wide way for all manner of mischief, and miseries, to bring ruine, and utter desolation upon me, is made in me: O dolefull unhappy day! when there is none to afford me any relief or succor. I am sick, and there is no Physician, wounded, and no Chyrurgeon, broken with breach upon breach, and there is no repaire.

2. It directs us what to pray for, if we desire the healing and prosperity of the land, i.e. That God would be pleased when he looks for men in the Gap, to find some there; and to that end, that he would both continue such to us, and not proceed to take all away; that he would increase their courage and resolution, and give them all encouragement; and also that he would from time to time pour out of his Spirit upon such as shall stand up to bear rule, that they may have a *Moses's*, a *Phinehas's*, a *David's*, an *Hezekiah's*, a *Zophar's* heart: Our sorrows may be many and great; but whiles we have such, we are not hopeless. God doth not give up a people till the whole head be sick and whole heart faint. It was *Moses* his prayer when he was to dye, that God would bellow a man upon his people *Israel*, *Numb. 27.16,17.* We should pray down zeal for the glory of God, and courage in confronting of sin into our Rulers, instead of endeavouring to rail and revile them out of it. Know therefore, that there is as much of your prosperity and welfare wrapt up in this, as in any secong caue, and you cannot pray aright for the peace of *Jerusalem*, except you pray for this: For that people that hath not such men to go in and out before them, cannot be an happy, but needs must be a miserable people, and without defence.

3. It may direct you what manner of men to make chiose of to bear rule over their Brethren, i.e. Such as are most likely to make up the hedge, and stand in gap; to drive out sin, and to keep out wrath; men spirited for Reformation. I speak as to a people that are free; and it is a choice blessing to the people of God.

that they may have men of their own chiose; and will be an aggravation of their sin and sorrows, if (having such a liberty) they abuse it to licentiousnes. The Lord, the God that searcheth hearts, knows what manner of spirit is active in the midt of us at this time; how our spirits are divided, and we bandied into factions each studying and contriving how to advance the interest of their cwn particular designs, and promote their own cause; and what shall become of the common cause of God, and of Religion in the mean while? Mens greatest enquiry is, whether such and such be of their part, but there is little enquiring, How stand they for God and for Godliness, how they are spirited against sin and Apostacy.

Well, let us remember it is in a great measure in our own hands to fortifie, or ruine our selves: & in nothing more can we shew our folly, or wisdome then in this, among works that are of publick concernment. I desire to be farre from being a stickler & busie body in matters of State, but only as a well wisher to the peace & prosperity of our *Jerusalem*, I would crave of all faithful ones, prudently and deliberately to consider the times, and use Christian wisdome in seeking to settle God amongst us, that the breaches of the Land may be made up. We are a sick people, the Symptoms are visible and manifest, and if we do indeed consult our own health, it ought to be our care to seek the chiefeft and ableft Phyficians: and if you will have Mountebanks take you in hand, that will heal the wounds flichtly, thank your selves if they break out again with more rancor then ever.

4. Be exhorted each one of us in our place & station to do our utmost to repair & make up the wall that is so broken down. That our fence is tottering & in many places open, is a thing obvious, he must shut his eyes that doth not see it: God who was our alone defence, is in a great measure withdrawn from us; & woe to us if he shall quite depart away, whole Cataracts of misery will soon break in upon us; there are enough waiting to make a prey of us; the mouths of devouring Beasts are open upon us: it is time then to seek the munition of Rocks. There is never an one of us but may (if God grant us grace) do something towards this happy work: it is sin in the bowels of the Land that hath caused these Earth-quakes that have shaken our walls: get this out, and God will come in, and dwell with us as in times of old: I would submissively entreat men of power and Influence to carry with them that Counsel of *Jeboaphas* to his Judges, 2 *Cron.* 19.8.11, &c. it is Argument enough to encourage to resolution in perfuit of the most hazardous duty, to believe that God will be with the good. God never deserted his own cause, nor those that were faithful in it; *New-England* is not without its Experiences in this matter, & for our selves, let it be our endeavour to strengthen the hands, and encourage the hearts of our faithful Rulers: let what they do for God and for the welfare of this people, please us: they were good times, when what good *David* did pleased his people. Don't undertake the Patronage of sin be not Attourneys and pleaders for wickednes: be willing to be reformed: hearken to the Convictions and faithful warnings that are given you in the Ministry: seek after peace and holines: mourn for the sin you cannot restrain and reform your own wayes that are not good: purge your hearts and Families: love and pray for the peace of *Jerusalem*: thus shall the breaches in *New-England Hedge* be made up; and the Lord when he seeks for men in the *Gaps*, shall find them filled, and will take pleasure in his people: *our Israel shall dwell safely, and we shall see our Jerusalem a quiet habitation: the Lord shall restore our Rulers as at the first, and our Judges as in the beginning: there shall be no breaking in, nor going out, nor comming in our Streets; for the Lord will go before us, and the God of Israel will be our towward.*

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